

**Part IV:
Park Definitions
&
Development Standards**

The Place To Be When You're Lonely

*Parks are delightful places
They have the sweet smells
Of laughter, joy, and happiness
The grass as green as anything
Trees as big as mountains
Oh, this place to be when you're lonely,
You get happy in a flash.*

***-by Noa Mirsch
London Elementary School, 3rd Grade***

Park Definitions & Development Standards

A. Introduction

Park types, facilities standards, and location criteria help the City with park planning, acquisition, development and upkeep. The identification of local standards establishes a “baseline” for parks development and strengthens communication between the various entities that are concerned with the future of the parks system.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed standards that were intended as guidelines for use at the local level. There is, however, no longer a national standard of “x” number of acres of parkland per 1,000 persons, as this method of calculation is now recognized as deficient. Current methodology calls on each community to determine its own defining blend of natural, social and economic characteristics. Each community is given the opportunity of developing its own standard, or Level of Service (LOS), tailored to an appropriate range, quantity and quality of recreational facilities within its fiscal limits. However, it is cumbersome and expensive for every community to develop an individual standard.

Cottage Grove has chosen to utilize the NRPA standards to develop its own park development and location criteria. NRPA standards used in the development of Cottage Grove are drawn from NRPA’s *1996 Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines*. These standards have been reevaluated and altered to meet the specific needs of Cottage Grove. Characteristics specific to Cottage Grove that were factors in this consideration include: geography; proximity to parklands managed by other jurisdictions; and the substandard number of neighborhood and community parks. The following chapter defines the types of parks in Cottage Grove, including: mini parks, nodal parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, school facilities, natural resource parks and greenways. The purpose, location criteria, size, service area and population benchmarks, typical facilities and features and representative parks in Cottage Grove are given for each park type. Each section concludes with comments regarding future planning and development of that type of park within the City system.

B. MINI PARKS

1. Purpose

- Address limited, isolated or unique recreational and aesthetic needs.
- Serve as a recreational and beautification space where acquisition of larger parks is not possible.
- Beautification areas are landscaped areas along natural features, travel ways, community gateways and plazas. These types of facilities usually consist of landscaping and reflective benefits.

2. Location Criteria

- NRPA Standard: Less than a ¼ mile service radius.
- Linked to community pathways & sidewalks.
- Consider existing small cultural or natural areas with recreational, reflective or City beautification potential.

Note: For mini-parks adjacent to Willamette River Greenway and Row River Trail see Nodal Parks along Greenways

3. Size Criteria

- NRPA: 2500 sq. ft to and one acre.
- Existing City Standard: None.
- Existing City Average: 0.48 acres
- Recommended Benchmark: 10,000 sq. ft to 1 acre.

4. Service Area and Population Benchmarks

- NRPA: There is no national standard. The former standard was 0.1-0.3 park acres per 1,000 population.
- Existing City Standard: None
- Existing City Average: 0.34 acres per 1,000 population (excluding Nodal Parks along Greenways)
- Recommended Benchmark: 0.1 acre per 1,000 population.

5. Facilities and Features

- Play area for young children.
- Benches and small picnic facilities.
- Highlight beautiful features (i.e. community flower bed, mature tree).
- Historic and cultural sites.

Facilities and Features not Included

- Off-street parking.
- Restrooms.

Note: Under special circumstances may have restrooms or off-street parking.

6. Representative Sites

- Several types of mini-parks exist in Cottage Grove, some serving a greater function than others. Three basic categories include City Beautification Areas, Basic Mini Parks and Nodal Parks along the Greenway or Row River Trail (addressed in Nodal Parks along Greenways below).

City Beautification Areas

- Gateway Park, Gateway Blvd. and Row River Trail, Road Right-of-Way approx. 0.14 acres.
- Triangle Park, 4th St. & Fillmore, approx. 0.12 acres.

Basic Mini Parks

- West End Park, “N” St. & Ash Ave., 0.15 acres.
- Whiteman Park, “H” St. and Birch Ave., 0.3 acres.
- Masonic Park, Row River Road across from BMX park, approx. 2 acres
- Cottage Grove Skate Park, Highway 99 and 4th Street, approx. 0.17 (*Note: Parkland owned by City and operated by the Cottage Grove Recreation Association.*)



West End Park play structure

7. Comments

- Because of their limited recreation value and other associated operational problems, the city should develop these sites only as Nodal Parks along Greenways, low-maintenance beautification areas or small playgrounds for children when no other space is reasonably available for a neighborhood park.
- Cottage Grove should model most of its mini-parks after the City of Medford’s “City Beautification Areas”, defined as landscaped areas that are located along street right-of-ways, intersections, entry features and plazas.
 - Design and quality of development will depend upon location and public visibility. Focus should be on parks that serve as waysides along pedestrian or bike routes.
 - Sites should be larger than 10,000 square feet (approx. ¼ acre). Only consider smaller sites when unique conditions exist and maintenance costs can be justified.
 - Designs should reflect ease of maintenance. The planting of annuals and other high maintenance plant materials should be discouraged, unless an active and dependable volunteer base is available to maintain area.
 - The city should encourage maintenance adoption of these sites.

- Designs should encourage use of non-plant materials such as landscape rock, etc., as well as drought-tolerant plant materials.
- Address potential vandalism.

C. NODAL PARKS ALONG GREENWAYS

1. Purpose

- Serve as waysides along the Willamette River Greenway, Row River Trail, and other future greenways, for walking, jogging and cycling, and as destination picnic and viewing locations.
- Enhance utility of greenways by providing places for rest and reflection.

2. Location Criteria

- Adjacent to Willamette River Greenway, Row River Trail and other future greenways.

3. Size Criteria

- NRPA: None
- Existing Standard: None
- Existing Average: 0.8 acres.
- Recommended Benchmark: Large enough to protect viewpoint, natural feature and trailside comforts.

4. Service Area and Population Benchmarks

- Not applicable.

5. Facilities and Features

- Scenic viewpoints.
- Natural features.
- Historic and cultural sites.

Facilities and Features not Included

- Off-street parking (unless provided as part of a plan for providing amenities along the greenway trail).
- Restrooms (unless provided as part of a larger plan for providing amenities along a greenway trail).

6. Representative Sites

- Benny Hubbell Park, N. 9th St. and Woodson Bridge, 0.25 acres.
- City Hall Park, 400 Main St., approx. 0.32 acres.
- Prospector Park, S. River Rd., north of Swinging Bridge, 0.73 acres.
- Riverside Park, S. River Rd. and Main St. Bridge, 1.48 acres.
- Silk Creek Park, Willamette Court, 0.74 acres, plus additional private land maintained by City.
- Trailhead Park, Row River Trailhead at 10th and Main St., 1.04 acres.

- Veteran Park, N. River Rd. and Main St. Bridge, 0.67 acres.
- Woodson Park, N. River Rd. and Woodson Bridge, 0.84 acres.



Riverside Park

7. Comments

- About half of Cottage Grove's Mini-Parks are nodes along the Willamette River Greenway or Row River Trail. These parks serve as waysides for walkers or as destination locations.
- The Row River Trail Feasibility Study recommends the development of additional nodal parks.
- The Willamette River Greenway is a defining natural and cultural feature of Cottage Grove. Increased access to viewpoints and picnic sites will retain and enhance this source of community identity.

D. NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

1. Purpose

- Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system and serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on providing informal, active and reflective recreational options for all ages.
- Unique site character helps create a sense of place for the neighborhood.

2. Location Criteria

- NRPA: Typically $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ mile service radius uninterrupted by non-residential roads or other physical barriers.
- Interconnected to trails/sidewalks/low-volume streets and within walking/biking distance of most users.
- High visibility to surrounding streets for public safety.

3. Size Criteria

- NRPA: 5 acres is considered *minimum* size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal. Demographic profiles and population density within the park's service area are the primary determinants of size.
- Other Oregon Community Standards:
 - o 2.5 to 15 acres (Eugene)
 - o 3 to 5 acres (Woodburn)
 - o 5 acres minimum, 7-10 acres optimum (Medford)
 - o 5-10 acres (Salem)
 - o 1 to 13 acres (Gresham)
- Existing City Standard: 5 acres minimum, 10 acres ideal (1974 Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Master Plan)
- Existing City Average: 0.6 acres.
- Recommended Benchmark: From 3 to 5 acres in a low-density neighborhood with flat park site of appropriate dimensions to develop. From 5 to 10 acres is ideal, particularly in medium and high-density neighborhoods.

4. Service Area and Population Benchmarks

- NRPA Standard: There is no longer a national standard for acres per 1,000 persons. The former national standard: 2.0 acres per 1,000 population.
- Other Oregon Community Standards:
 - o 1.3 developed acres/1,000 population in low-density residential areas and 1.8 developed acres/1,000 population in medium and high-density residential areas (Eugene target). Because Eugene currently does not construct mini-neighborhood parks, the figures for both mini-neighborhood and neighborhood parks are combined in the above standards. The neighborhood is delineated by natural or developed urban boundaries.
 - o 5.5 acres/1,000, combined with mini-parks (Woodburn)
 - o 2.2 acres/1,000 (Medford)
 - o 2.5 acres/1,000 (Salem)
 - o 1.3 acres/1,000 (Gresham)
- Existing City Standard: 2.0 acres/1,000 population (1974 Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Master Plan).
- Existing City Average: 0.13 acres/1,000 population.
- Recommended Cottage Grove Benchmark: 2.0 acres/1,000 population.

5. Facilities and Features

- Physical capability for both reflective (passive) and active recreation (50%/50% split).
- Active recreational features may include:
 - o Children's playground
 - o Paved games court
 - o Unstructured open play areas for practice or pickup games
 - o Low impact recreation options (i.e. bocce ball, horseshoes, outdoor chess tables)

- Wading pool, optional if highly desired by neighbors
- Activity Room, optional if highly desired by neighbors
- Reflective recreational features, which may include:
 - Internal trails, connecting to greenway trails or City sidewalks
 - Picnic/sitting areas
 - Public art
 - Conservation of natural features
 - Historic and cultural sites
- Innate aesthetic qualities.
- Security lighting.
- Bike racks.
- Available 7-10 off-street parking spaces for 5-10 acre park. No off-street parking for 3-5 acre parks, unless on-street parking is limited.

Facilities and Features not Included

- “Left-over” undesirable building locations.
- Programmed active recreational activities that would overuse the park.
- Permanent restrooms, unless strongly desired by neighbors or park has amenities that draw people from longer distances.

6. Representative Sites

- Fort Harrison Park, S. 3rd St. and Harrison, 0.39 acres.
- Stewart Orchard Park, S. 8th St. and Johnson Ave., 0.73 acres.



Fort Harrison Park play equipment

7. Comments

- Fort Harrison and Stewart Orchard Park are smaller than the ideal for neighborhood parks, but include, or are planned to include, many of the amenities of neighborhood parks, (e.g., playground, ball court, usable open space, picnic area and link to sidewalks).
- Cottage Grove does provide or maintain off-street parking at neighborhood parks. Because the Cottage Grove's parks are much smaller than is recommended and they are located within residential neighborhoods with sufficient on-street parking, off-street parking unnecessarily limits park acreage.

E. COMMUNITY PARKS

1. Purpose

- Serve broader purpose than neighborhood parks. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation and gathering needs.

2. Location Criteria

- NRPA: Serves two or more neighborhoods and ½-3 mile(s) distance.
- Served by arterial and collector streets and trail networks.
- Geographically centered.
- Services provided by nearby school-parks should be considered when determining location and facilities for community parks.

3. Size Criteria

- NRPA: Demographic profiles, population density, resource availability and recreation demand within its service area are the primary determinants of a community park's size. As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.
- Other Oregon Community Standards:
 - o 20 to 100 acres per park. The smaller size will not allow for the provision of a complete range of community park facilities and/or a community center. The smaller size may also preclude the development of a lighted sports field area due to insufficient space for buffering. The preservation of valued natural areas would suggest acreages toward the larger end. It is also important to include an acreage reserve for facilities in the future as required to meet new or changing recreational needs. (Eugene)
 - o 5-20 acres (Woodburn)
 - o 25 acres minimum, 30-40 acres optimum (Medford)
 - o 20-50 acres (Salem)
 - o 13-50 acres (Gresham)
- Existing City Standard: 40 acre minimum, 100 acre ideal (1974 Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Master Plan).
- Existing City Average: 6.89 acres.

- Recommended Benchmark: 5-20 acre minimum, but ideally at least one 20-50 acre park.

4. Service Area and Population Benchmarks

- NRPA: There is no longer a national standard of “x” number of acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. The former national standard for community parks was 5-8 acres/1,000 population.
- Other Oregon Community Standards:
 - o 4.0 acres/1,000 population with 2.0 developed acres/1,000 population (Eugene).
 - o 2.0 acres/1,000, combined with Municipal Park (Woodburn)
 - o 2.2 acres/1,000 (Medford)
 - o 2.5 acres/1,000 (Salem)
 - o 2 acres/1,000 (Gresham)
- Existing City Standard: 3.5 acres/1,000 population (1974 Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Master Plan).
- Existing City Average: 0.82 acres/1,000
- Recommended City Benchmark: 4.0 acres/1,000 population (equivalent to Coiner Park, plus one 5-acre park and one 20-acre park).

5. Facilities and Features

- Informal and programmed active recreation facilities, which may include:
 - o Large play structures
 - o Game courts
 - o Informal ball fields for youth play
 - o Low impact recreation options (i.e. bocce ball, horseshoes, outdoor chess tables)
 - o Swimming pool
 - o Disc golf area, climbing wall, skate park, and other similar popular activities
 - o Jogging trails
- Reflective recreation facilities, which may include:
 - o Internal trails, connecting to greenway trails or City sidewalks
 - o Individual and reservable group picnic/sitting areas
 - o General open space
 - o Unique landscape features
 - o Nature study areas
 - o Ornamental gardens
 - o Facilities for outdoor concerts, plays, farmers’ markets, and weddings
 - o Historic and cultural sites
- Parking lots.
- Security and facilities lighting.
- Provision of recreational opportunities not otherwise available.

Facilities and Features not Included

- Large parcels within the 100-year flood plain would better serve as natural areas.
- Extensive programmed adult athletic use.

6. Representative Sites

- Coiner Park, E. Main St., 6.89 acres.



Coiner Park tennis courts

7. Comments

- NRPA includes natural resource protection among community park purposes, while Cottage Grove does not. Therefore, the NRPA size standard will be higher.
- Cottage Grove's demographic profile results in a greater demand for a higher level of service for community parks, as is demonstrated by the overuse of Coiner Park. Cottage Grove has a higher percentage of large, young families, senior citizens and low-income residents than either Lane County or the State of Oregon. These three groups rely more heavily on city parks than the general citizenry.

F. SCHOOL-PARK

1. Purpose

- NRPA Standard: Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other parks types, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex and special use parks.

2. Location Criteria

- Determined by location of school district property.

- When and where planning coordination between the School District and City is possible, school parks should be bordered by neighborhood streets.
- Sites should exhibit the physical characteristics appropriate for intended uses.

3. Size Criteria

- If a school-park is serving as a Neighborhood or Community Park, the size criteria for the respective classifications should be used. School buildings and other special use facilities should not count toward park area values.

4. Service Area and Population Benchmarks

- NRPA Standard: None

5. Facilities and Features

- Athletic fields geared towards youth.
- Playground, including appropriate structures.
- Blacktop, possibly including painted courts.
- Joint-use agreement between involved agencies regarding acquisition, development, maintenance, liability, use and programming.

Facilities and Features not Included

- School building and associated special use facilities.
- Athletic fields geared towards adults.

6. Representative Sites

- Bohemia Elementary, 721 S. “R” St.
- Harrison Elementary, S. 10th St.
- Lincoln Middle School, 1565 4th St.
- Cottage Grove High School (old), 1000 Taylor Ave. (Note: CGHS includes the swimming pool).
- Cottage Grove High School (new), 1375 S. River Rd.
- Kelley Field, E. Quincy, 3.78 acres (Kelley Field is owned by the City, but leased to SLSD).

7. Comments

- South Lane School District (SLSD) plans to retain the athletic fields and swimming pool at the Old High School site, 1000 Taylor Avenue.
- Latham Elementary, currently outside city limits, may be relocated to within the City within the time frame of this plan.
- Harrison Elementary may be replaced during the time frame of this plan.

G. NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

1. Purpose

- Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open space and visual aesthetics.

2. Location Criteria

- Resource quality. Exhibits unique landscapes of the region. Significant emphasis should be placed on parcels identified in Cottage Grove's Goal 5 and Goal 7 inventories.
- Diversity and balance of natural areas, including wetlands, hillsides, forestland, prairie, floodplain and water bodies.
- Natural areas that contain multiple ecosystems (i.e. water body, wetland and upland connectivity), enabling the protection of a wider variety of wildlife.

3. Size Criteria

- NRPA Standard: Variable.
- Sufficient size to protect resources.

4. Service Area and Population Benchmarks

- NRPA Standard: There is no longer a national standard of "x" number of acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. There is no former national standard for natural areas. However, NRPA suggests cities provide 0.75 to 1.0 acres per 1,000 persons.
- Other Oregon Community Standards:
 - 1.0 acres/1,000 (Medford)
- Existing City Standard: None
- Existing City Average: 13 acres/1,000
- Recommended Benchmark: Retain existing natural areas. 7.0 acres/1,000 population to be applied to upland natural areas.

5. Facilities and Features

- Functioning ecosystem
- Wetlands
- Water bodies
- Forests/woodlands
- Geologic features
- Protection of rare, threatened or endangered species
- Wildlife habitat
- Interpretive exhibits
- Trails
- Historic and cultural sites

6. Representative Sites

- North Regional Park, N. Douglas, 58.7 acres (Note: Park includes a portion of Middlefield Golf Course, which is privately operated).
- East Regional Park, Row River Rd., 56.43 acres (Note: Park includes BMX track, which is operated by Cottage Grove BMX).



BMX track at East Regional Park

7. Comments

- Cottage Grove only has floodplain and riverside natural areas. There are no upland, forestland, or prairie natural areas.
- Cottage Grove has not completed Goal 5 or Goal 7 inventories.
- There are no local protections for wetlands.
- Cottage Grove has a Floodplain (Chapter 18.39) and Riparian Ordinance (Chapter 18.38).
- Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from overuse.

H. GREENWAYS

1. Purpose

- Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.
- Emphasize harmony with the natural environment.
- Allow for uninterrupted and safe pedestrian movement between parks throughout the community.
- Protect water quality.
- Preserve functional wildlife corridors through the city and between larger public and private natural areas.

2. Location Criteria

- Natural features: rivers, streams, ridgelines, and wetland boundaries.
- Human-made greenways: railroad beds, subdivisions prior to platting, old industrial sites, safe power line right-of-way, street rights-of-way.
- Prioritize greenway development near schools, senior living, and community centers.

3. Size Criteria

- NRPA: Variable
 - Subdivision: 25 feet wide
 - Minimum: 50 feet wide
 - Optimum: 200+ wide
- Other Oregon Community Standards:
 - Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) recommends buffer widths for streams (authors: Carol Krigger, Malu Wikinson, and Lori Hennings). The authors compiled numerous studies recommending some level of protection for fish and other wildlife (see appendix). In summary, most aquatic habitat functions can be maintained with a minimum buffer 100 feet wide on each side of the stream. Likewise, most terrestrial habitat functions can be maintained with a minimum buffer width on each side of the stream of 350 feet. Certain habitat functions require significantly greater buffer widths.
 - 50-100 feet wide including waterway (Medford)
- Existing City Standard: None.
- Existing City Average: Most of the Row River Trail Greenway is 60 feet in width. The City owns and manages approximately 3.35 miles of the 18-mile Row River Trail Greenway. City-owned portions of the Willamette River Greenway extend from the Coast Fork of the Willamette River to River Road. This width is variable.
- Recommended Benchmarks:
 - 60 feet wide for human-made Greenways
 - Minimum 100 feet in width on either side of waterway for water protection
 - Ideal of 330 feet in width on either side of waterway for wildlife protection (many avian and terrestrial species can cope with a minimum buffer of 330 feet on either side of the stream; pileated woodpecker, bald eagles, nesting ducks, and some other species will not be protected with this minimal buffer width)
 - Greater widths wherever possible for nodal parks and increased wildlife protection

4. Service Area and Population Benchmarks

- NRPA Standard: None.

5. Facilities and Features

- Natural corridors most desirable.
- Well-designed corridors linking residential neighborhoods with schools and other public places.
- Trails for walking, jogging, biking, skating, horseback riding.
- Public access to water bodies.
- Water trails for canoeing.
- Historic and cultural sites.
- Where general public use is promoted, adjoining areas should be protected by fences or other access controls.

6. Representative Sites

- Willamette River Greenway, River Rd., 6.46 acres Greenway (11.49 acres including Nodal Parks):
 - Benny Hubbell Park
 - City Hall Park
 - Prospector Park
 - Riverside Park
 - Veteran Park
 - Woodson Park
 - Silk Creek Park
- Row River Trail, Trailhead at Main St. and 10th, 24.91 acres:
 - Gateway Park (Note: this park is currently a City Beautification Area, but also serves as a wayside for the Row River Trail)
 - Trailhead Park



Silk Creek Park

7. Comments

- Greenways are Cottage Grove's greatest park legacy and should receive continued priority. Greenways add to our community identity, provide recreation opportunities, and protect the Willamette River.
- There are 12 locations along the Coast Fork and Silk Creek where City Right-of-Way extends all the way to the water boundary. Only one location allows pedestrian crossing and views of the Coast Fork at the Swinging Bridge.